

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 EB-04 AGR-05 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00

FEA-01 OES-03 INT-05 CIEP-01 /078 W

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R 211457Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2925

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ENRG, EC

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCE

1. PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LARA OCTOBER 17 HELD A WIDE-RANGING PRESS CONFERENCE WHICH HAS BEEN HEAVILY COVERED BY LOCAL MEDIA. ALTHOUGH DEVOTING HIMSELF LARGELY TO INTERNAL MATTERS, RODRIGUEZ DID MAKE A POINT OF REFERRING TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S INABILITY TO ATTEND THE QUITO OAS MFM, CALLING HIS ABSENCE "JUSTIFIED" BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES (QUITO 6946).

2. EARLY IN THE SESSION, RODRIGUEZ WAS ASKED IF THE ARMED FORCES WERE NOT IN DANGER OF BEING "POLITICIZED" BY ITS CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT. RODRIGUEZ THOUGHT NOT: HE CITED THE NORMAL FUNCTIONING OF THE ARMED FORCES' TRADITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND REFERRED TO "SOME CHANGES" BEING MADE TO GUARANTEE THE RETURN TO PURELY MILITARY DUTIES OF THOSE OFFICERS WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION, THUS "GUARANTEEING THE NORMAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CAREER". HE CONCLUDED THAT "IT WOULD BE ABSURD" TO THINK THAT THE MILITARY WAS PLANNING TO CREATE ANY POLITICAL PARTY OR MOVEMENT. RODRIGUEZ NOTED THAT SOME METHOD OF RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER WOULD HAVE

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TO BE DEVELOPED, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PAST.

HOWEVER, HE AGAIN VIGOROUSLY REJECTED ANY RETURN TO THE "(OLD POLITICS" OR THE OLD POLITICIANS.

3. THE PRESIDENT SPENT A MAJOR PORTION OF HIS INTERVIEW ON THE PRESSING ISSUE OF INFLATION AND PERIODIC SHORTAGES OF BASIC COMMODITIES. HE INDICATED THAT GOE ENTITIES SUCH AS THE SUPERINTENDANCY OF PRICES FACED AN ENORMOUS TASK; THAT THE GOE WOULD CONTINUE TO VIGOROUSLY PROSECUTE SPECULATORS AND PRICE GOUGERS; AND THAT THE CONTINUING USE OF GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED. RODRIGUEZ ALSO DETAILED, AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH, THE GOE'S EFFORTS TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION THROUGH INCREASED FARM CREDIT AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS. INTERESTINGLY, AT ONE POINT HE CITED CURRENT INFLATION RATES IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE US, IMPLYING THAT ECUADOR'S OWN EXPERIENCE, PAINFUL AS IT SEEMED, COMPARED FAVORABLY.

4. RODRIGUEZ ALSO RESPONDED, AT LESSER LENGTH, TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS COVERING INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED (QUITO 6939), HE INDICATED THAT "ECUADOR WILL MAINTAIN THE PRICE OF ITS OIL AND I HOPE THE OTHER OPEC MEMBERS WILL DO THE SAME". HE ALSO NOTED THAT IT WAS ECUADOR'S "ASPIRATION" EVENTUALLY TO CONTROL 51 PERCENT OF LOCAL OIL COMPANY OPERATIONS BUT THAT "THE MATTER HAS TO BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY FROM THE FINANCIAL POINT OF VIEW. FOR THE TIME BEING WE HAVE TO ARRANGE THE ACQUISITION, ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED, OF THE 25 PERCENT (OF TEXACO-GULF)". TO A QUESTION REGARDING THE CONTROVERSIAL CHILEAN INVESTMENT LAW AND ITS EFFECT ON THE ANDEAN PACT, RODRIGUEZ NOTED THAT ECUADOR HAD ENTERED THE PACT FREELY WITH THE INTENTION OF HONORING IT, AND THAT "WE MUST EXPECT" THAT OTHER SIGNATORIES DO LIKEWISE. FINALLY, IN REFERENCE TO ALLEGED CIA ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA, RODRIGUEZ STATED HIS "REJECTION OF ANY INTERVENTION, FROM WHEREVER IT COMES, AND OF WHATEVER IDEOLOGY".

5. AS ON PREVIOUS SUCH OCCASIONS, RODRIGUEZ GAVE AN IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE. AT ALL TIMES POISED, HE SEEMED VERY MUCH IN COMMAND. THE GREAT LENGTH AT WHICH HE REPLIED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO QUESTIONS ON INTERNAL ISSUES IS AN INTERESTING INDEX TO HIS CURRENT PRIORITIES AND PREOCCUPATIONS. THERE WERE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS-RELATED QUESTIONS, BUT TO THESE RODRIGUEZ TENDED TO KEEP HIS REPLIES SHORT AND DIGNIFIED. HE PASSED OVER NUMEROUS OCCASIONS FOR NATIONALISTIC POSTURING AND, ALTHOUGH THE OPPORTUNITY WAS FREQUENTLY THRUST UPON HIM, RODRIGUEZ SEEMED AT PAINS TO AVOID ANY DIRECT ATTACK ON THE US. BREWSTER

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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